Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

CRITICISMS AND DISCUSSIONS.

TIME AND SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY.[1]

In this paper I shall use the term "speculative philosophy"—used by Prof. Bosanquet to distinguish his type of idealism from that of the "mentalists" and "panpsychists"—to mean that philosophy which holds that "the view of the universe as a uniform and permanent system of natural laws is a necessary element in a rational experience."[2] This philosophy cannot "conceive how there could be a rational life without an apprehension of an objective order; unmoved by our clamor; indifferent to our moods; with which we can hold commerce only on nature's own terms."[2] In fact representatives of this type of idealism do not distinguish between reality and truth. What is real must be true and what is true must be real. By "real" they mean systematic coherence, organic unity: a thing is only real when we consider it in its relation to the whole of reality. But there are degrees of reality: we may say a thing is only phenomenal when considered in isolation, when considered as an independent existence it approaches more and more perfect reality as we understand it in its relation to the rest of existence. In other words, the reality of an important historical event, or let us say a chair, is real in proportion to its organic structure or unity. The same thing is true of our concepts or judgments: a judgment is false if it is out of relation, it becomes true and its degree of truth is determined by its organic interrelation to other judgments, not only in the present universe of discourse but for all actual and possible ones. So we may say that only that judgment which implies the whole universe is true in the highest degree. The reason why an esthetic experience is more representative of the Absolute than let us say a chair, is because in the esthetic experience there is more harmony, organization, interdependence, and organic unity.

---

[1] Delivered before the Philosophical Conference, Columbia University, March 18, 1918.

[2] Creighton, "Two Types of Idealism," *Journ. of Philos.*, 1917, p. 534.

I do not question that to be able to live at all we must live in a rational system and that the criterion of truth is coherence, or rationality. But I think we may question whether it is necessary to have an absolutely coherent system of the type just described in order for us to be able to transact business, or for me to be able to communicate the thesis of this paper. I think that we are forced to admit that a judgment or an act of experience is more intelligible when seen in its relation to other judgments or acts of experience, and that the *ideal* of knowledge would be to see each and every judgment and each and every act of experience in its relations—if the relations would be static and eternal—to all and every other judgment and acts of experience. But speculative philosophy goes farther than that, it assumes that what I call *ideal* in my criterion of truth is really an already existing reality. In fact, in this view that is all that reality is, i. e., an organic interdependent unity. The unity is so complete that to speak of terms, or relations, or time, or a subject as over against an object, is to speak in terms of contradiction.

The leaders of speculative philosophy claim that a theory of reality which holds that reality is a unity, must also hold that this unity is a timeless and changeless unity. It is true that some are ambiguous on this point, as, e. g., Hegel in his relation of logic to the philosophy of nature, but most of them are very clear. If we ask them why it is that we apparently live in a world which endures in time, changes and develops, there is no answer. Or we may say, suppose you are right in showing that a rational analysis of experience leads to a conception of a static and timeless Absolute, it is still your business to show, why we should have this world of appearance, and, furthermore, what really is the relation between these two worlds. To that—if we take Mr. F. H. Bradley as their spokesman—the answer would be, we do not know, all we can say is that it is so, and the rest is a mystery.

The absurd contradictions which the analysis of time and development leads to, forces the speculative philosophers to the conception that time and development are only illusory. The best illustration of that we find in Mr. Bradley's book *Appearance and Reality,* in which he employs "Zeno's method" to prove his conclusions. He finds that the concept of continuity in the principle of causality involves empty space between the cause and effect, and also that the concept of causation leads us into infinite regress; furthermore, the fact that we arbitrarily select the cause of an event from a plurality of conditions leads him to suppose that the concept of causation is only an appearance and not a reality. But it never enters his mind to ask the question: if reality is the organic unity of appearance, does not change in phenomenon affect it? In the final analysis the speculative philosopher must accept one of the two following possibilities: first, that the causal world does affect the real world, and the real world consequently cannot be timeless; or, second, that the world which we know, the world which we experience, the world in which causality is real, is an illusion, and after all the real world remains timeless and perfect.

We also find that speculative philosophy goes out of the bound of experience and scientific logic, in its treatment of the law of identity-in-difference as a fundamental axiom of logic. It argues from quantitative and qualitative difference to identity of reality. But I may suggest that all we need in our logic of science is a postulate which holds that the world of qualitative and quantitative divergence falls into *approximate types or groups and subgroups.* In other words: that the world of discrete and divergent objects approximate the *ideal* regularities of type necessary in the logic of science. To put it in still other terminology we may state: that the postulated law of similarity or even of identity of types is only a *limit*—using the term limit in the mathematical sense. I think that we all agree that to comprehend the ground of an event, a person, a book, is to have an inkling of the system of connection in which that event, person, or book takes place, lives, or exists, and furthermore I may suggest that the understanding of the universe involves at least a presupposition that the universe is approximately an ordered and connected continuum. But to be able to admit this, does not require the admission that the relations and behavior of each and every bit of experience is definitely and precisely settled forever. It only means that every bit of experience acts and develops within the limits of the type or class to which it belongs. But in approaching the limit there are infinite possibilities of relations, e. g., that there can be an infinite number of circles drawn for each and every point between any two points of a compact series, no matter how infinitesimal the distance between them may be. Then I may say: that knowledge comprehends the approximate order and interconnection of reality, but as distinct and unique phases of real entities. And finally, the principle of continuity means that we should analyze the complex as far as it is possible, keeping in mind that there is discontinuity, e. g., qualitative changes. In physics we may approach quantitative continuity in the transformation of energy, but not in qualitative changes. Or in psychology we may speak of quantitative continuity of nerve and muscle reaction, but we cannot speak of continuity of the "feeling-tone" accompanying this reaction. Consequently, if we postulate absolute continuity we are really ignoring certain discrete phases of change and development, and our postulate is illegitimate and false, and furthermore, as a postulate for scientific logic, unnecessary.

Now let us examine the concept of teleology in speculative philosophy. If the universe is an absolutely perfect organic unity, changeless, timeless, in which there is always a perfect equilibrium, how can we speak of the world in teleological terms? The absolutist says we cannot. The universe as a whole is not teleological, teleology holds true only of the world of appearance. It is true they say that teleology is a higher concept or is of a higher order than the concept of causality, but nevertheless teleology does not pertain of the Absolute because teleology involves time and novelty. Bosanquet says teleology is a subform of individuality, while the Absolute is not a self, because a self presupposes a not-self, says Bradley. Consequently selfhood or personality is an appearance.

We find Bosanquet arguing for the conservation of value, but he seems to forget that the conservation of value is meaningless unless the values are conserved for individuals, but again the individual as a personality is only transitory and illusory. It is true that human beings have a higher degree of reality than plants, and plants again a higher degree of organization or reality than stones, but nevertheless in the final analysis the difference is only in degree and not in kind. And furthermore does it follow that individual things are illusory, because we have to assume a medium of interaction. Do we have to assume a ground of interaction for the beings that interact? And suppose we admit that there is such a medium, or ground, does it follow that individuals are only differentiations or negative differentials of that medium? It is true that individuals communicate with one another, consequently there must be some sort of physical medium of interaction. But this medium is only a tool of ours to enable us to carry out our communications, but the beings who communicate or interact do not have to be mere differentiations of that medium.

Spinoza and especially his followers Hegel, Bradley, Bosanquet are right in saying that a human being develops only in his associations with other selves and their institutions. The goal of the individual is the complete going on to realize more of the unity of the Absolute, to come in more intimate union with Him, says Hegel. The individual becomes more perfect and free in his realization of necessity and its place in God, says Spinoza. The difference between Hegel, Bradley, Bosanquet, and Spinoza is that the former, i. e., Hegel, Bradley, and Bosanquet, speak of the personal nature of man as spirit, while the latter speaks of him as a mode of the attribute of substance. As I have said, they are right in claiming that the individual develops by individual transcendence,—the individual who lives by himself, who thinks that he is the sum total of the universe, is an individual who shrinks more and more into nothingness. The individual finds himself, so to speak, in his relations with other individuals, e. g., his friends, family, social and political institutions, by living in general relations. But the crucial question which Spinoza and especially Hegel, Bradley, and Bosanquet avoid, is whether the individual through realizing his individuality in his relationships with others, loses his individuality as a finite center of experience in the Absolute or God. If the individual grows in proportion to his intimate relationships to others, then we must also admit that the Absolute grows. And, furthermore, if finite individuals are literally parts of an Absolute they are not finite individual centers of experience, but if the individual is not identified with the Absolute, but by "harmony" is meant just a relationship between two terms, then the Absolute is not a perfect unity but a synthetic relationship of individuals.... We may say still further, that if Hegel, Bradley, and Bosanquet identify literally individual elements with the unity of the Absolute they must say with Spinoza that all value—and with that all desires, all interests, all purposive activity whether conscious or unconscious which value involves—is lost and destroyed with the loss of individuality in the Absolute.[3]

Speculative philosophy also claims that progress takes place in the universe and in the individual, but not in the Absolute. In fact it cannot take place in the Absolute, because the Absolute is perfect and timeless. But how is it possible? we may ask. How can the world of individuals, of philosophy, of history, of science, etc., develop and change and the Absolute which contains them be changeless? They say progress or development in general is only—as concerns the Absolute—a constant redistribution of parts within the whole, that is, one part of the Absolute may progress but the other must retrogress, in order that the unity may be in perfect equilibrium. But even that, it seems to me, involves time. And furthermore, did not progress—that is, the development of Spirit—in Hegel's philosophy play an important role? Using Hegel as an example we may ask: would the speculative philosopher be willing to say that, e. g., Hegel's analysis of the development of monarchy from a feudal state—in his philosophy of history—characterizes a decisive progress in the universe as a whole? But he answers in the negative, the Absolute never progresses. Consequently progress is also an illusion. But I may suggest that experience teaches us differently, and our logic of science—as I have mentioned before—does not require static ideal relationships. Therefore we are justified in saying that the Absolute of speculative philosophy is not a teleological or progressive unity, it is timeless; not being teleological it must be mechanical. Speaking in the strictest terms it cannot even be mechanical, because mechanism implies the principle of causality and that implies time.

---

[3] As I have pointed out in another connection ("The Influence of Mathematical Concept on the Structure of Spinoza's System," Ohio State University Library, 1917).

* * *

I think it will be profitable to mention briefly the philosophic doctrine that appeared recently in the *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* under the name of "Structure,"[4] in so far as it has any bearing upon our general problems.

The main thesis of this article is the same as the fundamental postulate of speculative philosophy. "The world is a rational, orderly world, independent of man's thinking or activity." The "thisness" in virtue of which the world is rational or logical, the author calls "structure"—it is "that which persists through all changes, or that which is defined in its own terms, or that which stands under, or that which has attributes, or that the knowledge of which is conclusive and final....in fact it means something absolute without meaning God,"[5] it is eternal and timeless. But there is a decisive difference between "structure" and the Absolute. Structure does not imply an all-inclusive universe of which everything that exists or can be conceived is a part. Outside of structure there is flux, activity, although not independent of it, nevertheless not identical with it. Structure is timeless, static, and eternal, but the growing residue or flux is "subject to this structure suspended in time fully as much as the displacement of its parts is subject to a structure extended in space."[6]

---

[4] Vol. XIV, 1917, p. 680.

[5] F. J. E. Woodbridge, *loc. cit.*, pp. 686f.

With such conception of the universe the author of this article has the advantage over the speculative philosopher in that his theory of the cosmos has room for the postulates of causality and continuity, and even the postulate of teleology, all of which are so essential in a logic of science. For him change is a genuine reality, although change must follow definite laid-down forms or laws which are eternal and changeless in themselves.

But if we look closely into this type of cosmos and examine the change that takes place, we will find that it falls short of the change which seems to me to be characteristic of nature. The change which is possible in a world in which structure is eternal and supreme, is a change which must follow definite, inherent, unchangeable, and perfectly organized laws. There is no genuine novelty possible, but only in so far as there is a redistribution of the residue, the same matter takes up new but eternal forms. However, change and development appears to be of somewhat different character. It seems to me that we have plenty of examples where genuine novelty is developed through men's activity and ingenuity, novelty which may follow general types of development, but which also produces new organization and values which are not inherent parts of the movement, that is, not the necessary consequences of that movement, so that there is genuine spontaneity. The development of new qualities are the functions of changing human needs and not of rigid structural laws, although we must admit that the realization of these values is limited by their proximate limitations to which matter is subject. I may suggest that individuals are plastic and capable of developing new relationships, as a result of their development. The order and organization of individuals, e. g., in a society, is an order which is the result of the conduct and behavior of its individual members, and none of it existed even potentially in the structure as a presupposition of such a conduct; all we can say is that lower forms of organization have developed into higher forms of organization.

Or again in human creation we have plenty of examples of genuine novelty. Take, e. g., a new picture, a new book, a new philosophy, a new symphony, or even a new type of printing-machine or flying-machine, in each case we may have the same energy or mass, there may not have been any new energy created, but surely new values, new *purposive* energy has been created. A picture is more than a distribution of paints. Change for the most part is "creative synthesis," a concept developed by Lotze and baptized by Wundt.

---

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 682.

Now let us examine the concept of structure itself and see if that is of the type we really find in nature. The author says that "structure is a *discovery and not a hypothesis*....It is met in action and practice by setting one stone upon another...."[7] The laws of thermodynamics and mechanics, the laws of biology and physiology, or the scientific laws in general are the exemplifications of structure as we find them in nature, while we have ventured to suggest that the scientific laws are only *ideal limits* or statistical averages of well-defined types or classes, according to which the elements which are qualitatively different and quantitatively discrete change and develop. Scientific laws deal with abstract characteristics or attributes of things, that is, with motion, or extension, weight, etc., as isolated properties of particular objects and not with concrete objects in their complex relations. In fact to find a "law of nature" we have to abstract from experience, leave the ground of reality, the region of concrete things, and find the functional relations between abstract isolated attributes of particular things.

If A changes at the same rate as B we say that A is a function of B and calculate the derivative which will represent the rate of change. We say that this derivative represents the law or rate of change of the body, or in other words, that this derivative stands for the relationship which exists between the two bodies A and B. But if we carefully observe the change of A and B, whether it be in a physical, chemical, or psychological laboratory, and plot the curve representing this functional change, we find that the relationship between A and B is not as absolute as the principal concept of calculus has it at all, in fact the change plotted does not at all represent a curve. What we really have between our x and y axes, is a number of points widely distributed, but yet within certain limits representing a continuously progressing curve. We are then told that the variation in the curve is due to defective instruments or to imperfect conditions,—there are so many other factors which play a definite role and are responsible for that variation. As the claim goes: it is not that the laws do not perfectly operate, but that there are a number of other laws which are operating simultaneously, and the result is this variation. Now that may be so, *but that is a hypothesis and a very useful hypothesis*—just as much as the hypothesis that the sun will rise to-morrow—*but not a discovered fact of experience.* Consequently I may suggest again that the postulate of continuity means only that we ought to analyze regularity in nature as far as we can, but not substitute a timeless, eternal structure or Absolute as the ground of change. The same we may say is true with the postulate of coherence which I have suggested at the beginning of this paper, as being useful and legitimate in so far as it represents an *ideal limit* toward which the actual progressive organization of experience leads; e. g., in the development of economical corporations, military organizations, religious and moral institutions, where there is more and more dependence of each and every individual upon each and every other individual. In a pluralistic world there is an actual striving toward that *ideal limit.* We select and adjust ourselves as we think it is best to move forward toward a progressive organization.

---

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 683.

The fundamental postulate of science is that there is a sufficient reason for every happening, that is, every effect has a cause, even though there are no two effects or causes alike. But this postulate is only legitimately used in so far as by causation we mean an *ideal limit* of a contingency table which represents a classification of the degree of dependency between A and B, whether the dependency be qualitative or quantitative. The use of this definition of causation is that it puts variation as the fundamental factor in experience. We may also add that speculative philosophy as a rule confuses the postulate of causality—which, as I have said, is a legitimate postulate of science—with the category of ground and consequence. The first is an appropriate postulate in a finite and temporal cosmos, while the second implies eternal, infinite, and timeless unity. I may again repeat that the postulate of causality with its implications of continuity and uniformity is only used in science for its instrumental value and as an *ideal limit* of what really—*as far as we know*—is discrete and discontinuous in experience.

The distinctive feature of a pluralistic theory of the cosmos as over against a speculative-philosophy theory of the universe is that in a pluralistic cosmos things are connected with other things in many ways, but no single thing nor the totality of things includes everything or dominates over everything. The pluralistic cosmos is more like an individualistic society, without any Over-Individual, becoming more and more organized, while speculative philosophy claims that if we deal with the reality of realities, "everything is present to everything else in one vast instantaneous co-implicated completeness" (James).

Pluralism claims that there is nothing in life which is not complex, and that any one of its relations is only one aspect of it, or one way of looking at it. When it acts in that relation or connection it does not imply that it must act in all possible and actual relations simultaneously. For the pluralist things may act one way at one time and another way at another time, but, nevertheless, we still have a coherent cosmos in which each and every individual is a member and each and every individual builds the society: a coherent cosmos but not an organic interdependent unity.

It is in a pluralistic universe that teleological development is possible, that personality with its struggle toward the ideal is intelligible.

I may conclude suggesting a pluralistic theory instead of a monistic theory, not in order to solve the problems but rather to throw light upon the old problems and to create new ones.

A. J. Schneeweiss.

Columbia University.

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY PROFESSOR PATTEN'S RECENT ARTICLE.

Not for a long time have I come upon so stimulating and deep-going an article as Professor Patten's in the April *Monist,* and I desire to set down some of the thoughts that have been suggested by it. My chief interest now is in the forming of some tenable conception of the elementary nature of things, and it is help in this direction that particularly attracts my attention. Professor Patten's view of deficit and surplus mechanisms and of the latter as relatively unspecialized (and in this connection the view of the contrasted functions of the nerves and the blood), his interpretation of dreams, the new angle from which he regards the problem of